

TO THE

PEOPLE OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.

LETTER VIII.

Saxe-Cobourg's tooth-ache.—Paupers in England.—In London.—Treatment of Paupers.—The Regent's house-keeping.—Cossacks will lick their lips.—Remedy for Pauperism.—Desperate state of the farmers.—Proposed tax upon Emigration.—The Church threatened.

Botley, 13th April, 1816.

Before I enter upon any other matter, I must inform you that the prince of SAXE COBOURG has had a *tooth-ache*, and that, as you will, doubtless, be rejoiced to hear, the pain has been removed, but, unfortunately, not without the pulling out of the tooth.* However, it is, as you will see, very gratifying to us to know, that His Serene Highness loses no time in studying our language and laws. The following are the words in which these facts are communicated to the public: "From the *Brighton* papers it appears that the Prince LEOPOLD of Cobourg had been relieved from a painful *tooth-ache* by the *successful* extraction of the diseased tooth. We understand that the operation was performed by Mr. BEW, the skilful dentist of that town. Prince LEOPOLD of Cobourg regularly devotes the early part of the day to study, and the greatest proportion of it to *reading*, in order that he may become conversant not only with the *English* language, but more particularly with its *history*, *laws*, *customs*, and *manners*. The Reverend J. S. Clarke generally attends his Serene Highness on these occasions. That Prince Leopold should *not be diverted* from his present application is assigned as one *important* reason for his Serene

Highness deferring his introduction into the drawing room to-morrow."

Now, upon the reading of this paragraph, which I take, mind you, from the *Morning Chronicle*, which is not what is called a Ministerial print, you will burst out: "What a shame for a country abounding in men of sense, learning, and courage, to suffer themselves to be thus, in appearance at least, the abject slaves of such contemptible creatures as this! What! send for a stupid man like this from Germany in order to obtain the chance of keeping up the *breed* of kings for England! The scandal is the greater on account of the obscure race from which the man comes. Is there no man in all England capable of presiding over the nation's councils? Does 'famous Old England,' the 'fast-anchored isle,' stand in need of this son of that Saxe-Cobourg, whom the French Republicans flogged like a thief? How many thousands of paupers will this Saxe-Cobourg add to the already shocking list! But, the greatest, the most unequivocal mark of baseness on the part of the English, is, that they *look with veneration* towards this insignificant man, whom we, in America, should no more attend to than we should to a blacker of shoes." But, this would be wrong. It would only show that you know very little about the real state of the public mind in England. Let me hasten, then, to other matters, as to which you will be able to understand me.

Your example may, in many respects, be useful to us; but, in many more, ours may be useful as a warning to you; and, in none more so, than on the subject of *pauperism*, which has increased upon us in a degree, which, at last, threatens to destroy the very roots of the social system in England. In a Letter, which I published on the 15th of November, 1814, addressed to a friend in America, on the Expenses, Taxes, &c. of England, compared with those of America, and which Letter, I perceive, has been republished in your country, I could not, upon the subject of the poor rates, speak *positively*, there having been no official report made of them, since the year 1803. But, I spoke of them by the way of *computation*, the basis of which was the increase of poor rates in

* The common talk in London is, that it is the *itch* which Saxe-Cobourg has; and that he stays at Brighton to get purified. Another story is, that it was not *he* but his *brother*, that the Princess wished to have; and that she will not have the one who is here. These are falsehoods, I dare say; but, they serve to show what a sort of a people this must be, who can see themselves taxed for the support of persons, whom they hold in contempt.

the parish of *Bishops Waltham*, with the particulars of which I was but too well acquainted. According to this computation, the poor rates, I said, of the year when I was writing, would amount, for all England, (including Wales,) to 7,896,556*l*. I do not perceive, that any doubt of my accuracy, in this respect, has been started. But, *now*, we have the fresh *official* accounts before us, made up to March, 1815, that is to say, 4 months after the date of my computation, or estimate; and, I must confess, that, in laying its contents before you, I do feel some degree of pride. In this official return are not included all the parishes, for want of time, perhaps; so that the return is not quite complete. But, from the following figures, taken from the return itself, you will see how surprisingly near my computation was to the reality.

“ In 13,922 Parishes returned, £ 7,023,386
 “ In 854 Parishes not returned.”

The Parishes not returned are principally in populous parts of England. So that the total amount of the rates, if all had been returned, would, I dare say, have been within 100,000*l*. of the computation. However, we have now the fact before us, and a dreadful fact it is. Mr. HOLDSWORTH, whose letter I have inserted for publication in America, because the Cossacks should have nothing to gainsay, estimates the poor rates as being much higher *now*, than they were last year. I *do not*, if we speak in *positive* amount; because it requires less to feed people with cheap corn than with dear corn. But, as the positive amount has not been diminished, the *relative* amount has been dreadfully augmented, because the means of support have been greatly *lessened*.

During the war, and what were called days of prosperity, I never could obtain a hearing upon this subject. When Pitt, and Rose, and Perceval used to be boasting about the prosperity of the country, the flourishing state of the country, the resources of the country, I always bade them look at the increase of the poor rates and paupers; and asked them whether a country with so large a part of the people paupers, could be said to be prosperous. *Now*, however, this subject is pressing

itself forward with irresistible force. It *now* comes arrayed with all the horrors of misery, and all the terrors of desperation. Millions of people never yet submitted to be *starved*. Those who raise the food and raiment by their labour must and will have some of it. Laws, coercion, nothing will prevent this. The body, however miserable, will not lie down and die without a struggle.

You have seen before, that many Members of Parliament have *complained* of the amount of the poor rates. But, of what avail is complaint on such a subject? Any man may as reasonably complain of his great age; for, as it is impossible for any law to make him younger, so is it impossible for any law to diminish the poor rates, unless by diminishing the number of paupers; and that is only to be done by a *total change of system*, which these gentlemen are very careful never to propose, and which, indeed, they seem always prepared to reprobate. What should we think of a man who *complained* that strong beer made him drunk, and who still continued to drink strong beer by the gallon? Yet, such a man's conduct would be just as consistent as is that of those persons who complain of the increasing amount of the poor rates, while they steadily support a system, the unavoidable effect of which is to create paupers.

As to the *extent* of the evil it is not to be described in all its parts. Young and old, there are little short of 2 millions of paupers in England, including common beggars and persons in alms-houses; and that is, upon an average, about *one* pauper, or beggar, to every four who are not paupers or beggars. I have, upon a former occasion, given particular details of *country* parishes. I will here give an account of the paupers and rates in the parish of St. SEPULCHRE, which is in the heart of the City of London. I have lying before me an official account, given to me by Mr. MILLER of that Parish, signed by WM. SCAIFE, Vestry Clerk, and dated on the 11th of January, 1816, which states, that there were then,

Paupers in the Work-house,	227
Children at Nurse,	25
Insane Poor,	8
Relieved out of the House,	92
Relieved in the Country,	9

besides those paupers who receive occasional relief.

Now, the number of persons who pay poor rates in this parish was, at the same period, 612. The annual amount of the expenses was about £6 600.

This is a pretty picture of the prosperity of the opulent city of London. Facts like these are food for reflection with sensible men. Such men must see, that it is not an act of parliament to make a new arrangement as to the mode of raising the rates, which will cure this most dreadful evil. Before the wars against the people of France; before those wars, which have ended in restoring the Bourbons, the Pope, and the Inquisition; before those wars, during which, by way of episode, the Washington Buildings were burnt, and Alexandria was plundered; before those wars the paupers in this country were not one third part so numerous as they now are. So that here is a change, which the Cossacks should never forget, when they are boasting of the achievements of that "glorious contest."

Of the manner in which the paupers are treated, it would be difficult to give any general description, seeing that it varies very much according to the ability of the people to pay, and to the disposition of the persons having power over them. But, what may be done with them, and what is done, in some cases, may be gathered from the following speech of SIR ROBERT HERON, made in the House of Commons on the 2d instant. "SIR ROBERT HERON moved for leave to bring in a Bill, for amending certain clauses in an act recently passed respecting the Lincoln Poor Rates. He was not aware of any good which resulted from particular local acts respecting poor rates. as he thought the act of the 22d George II. was admirably suited to every case. After a painful recital of the miserable state of the workhouse in that city, he mentioned that there were five cells strongly guarded with iron bolts, not for the reception of lunatics, but for the punishment of such poor persons as might fall into any transgression. In each of these there were strong iron staples in the wall and floor, to which the poor delinquent was chained. Among several instances of cruelty, the worthy Baronet mentioned, that a Chelsea pensioner, 70 years of age, and totally

"blind, had been, for a whole fortnight chained to the floor because he had been drunk! That a very young girl, having contracted a certain disease, had been chained in a similar manner to the floor, lest she should contaminate others. One chain fixed round her body had been weighed, and would the House believe him when he stated that it was no less than 28 pounds weight! These facts he pledged himself were true. He moved, therefore, for leave to bring in a bill for amending the present Act."

I dare say that the Cossacks of Massachusetts will maintain, that all this is very right; or, at any rate, that it is much better that this should take place, than that the French nation should have been suffered to remain free. But, they may be well assured, that this state of things cannot last for many years. The number of the paupers is now become so great in proportion to the population of the country, that some serious consequence is at no great distance from us. So that, unless the Cossacks put up prayers for the system, it will fail, at last, as sure as they are born.

However, you, in America, must not suppose that we are all paupers; that none of us live in a good style. We are very liberal people towards our great folks, as I have before shown you. But, that you may have some idea of the way, in which our Royal Family live, I will here give you an account of the expense of the Prince Regent's living for a quarter of a year, as stated in the Lord Steward's account up to the 5th of January last. The Lord Steward may be regarded as head servant in the family, who orders in the eatables and drinkables, and pays the in-door servants and the tradesmen. There are other great men who manage the other departments of expense. The account is as follows:

Bread, Butter, Bacon,	
Cheese, and Vegetables,	£1,121 19 10½
Butcher, Poulterer, and	
Fishmonger, - - -	3,411 13 1½
Beer and Cider, - - -	586 9 0
Wax and Tallow Lights, -	1,460 19 7
Grocery, Oilery, Lemons,	
&c. Tea, Milk and	
Cream, - - - -	3,235 15 7½
Wine, - - - -	2,120 3 10

the parish of *Bishops Waltham*, with the particulars of which I was but too well acquainted. According to this computation, the poor rates, I said, of the year when I was writing, would amount, for all England, (including Wales,) to 7,896,556*l*. I do not perceive, that any doubt of my accuracy, in this respect, has been started. But, *now*, we have the fresh *official* accounts before us, made up to March, 1815, that is to say, 4 months after the date of my computation, or estimate; and, I must confess, that, in laying its contents before you, I do feel some degree of pride. In this official return are not included all the parishes, for want of time, perhaps; so that the return is not quite complete. But, from the following figures, taken from the return itself, you will see how surprisingly near my computation was to the reality.

"In 13,922 Parishes returned, £ 7,023,386
 "In 854 Parishes not returned."

The Parishes not returned are principally in populous parts of England. So that the total amount of the rates, if all had been returned, would, I dare say, have been within 100,000*l*. of the computation. However, we have now the fact before us, and a dreadful fact it is. Mr. HOLDSWORTH, whose letter I have inserted for publication in America, because the Cossacks should have nothing to gainsay, estimates the poor rates as being much higher *now*, than they were last year. I *do not*, if we speak in *positive* amount; because it requires less to feed people with cheap corn than with dear corn. But, as the positive amount has not been diminished, the *relative* amount has been dreadfully augmented, because the means of support have been greatly *lessened*.

During the war, and what were called days of prosperity, I never could obtain a hearing upon this subject. When Pitt, and Rose, and Perceval used to be boasting about the prosperity of the country, the flourishing state of the country, the resources of the country, I always bade them look at the increase of the poor rates and paupers; and asked them whether a country with so large a part of the people paupers, could be said to be prosperous. *Now*, however, this subject is pressing

itself forward with irresistible force. It *now* comes arrayed with all the horrors of misery, and all the terrors of desperation. Millions of people never yet submitted to be starved. Those who raise the food and raiment by their labour must and will have some of it. Laws, coercion, nothing will prevent this. The body, however miserable, will not lie down and die without a struggle.

You have seen before, that many Members of Parliament have *complained* of the amount of the poor rates. But, of what avail is complaint on such a subject? Any man may as reasonably complain of his great age; for, as it is impossible for any law to make him younger, so is it impossible for any law to diminish the poor rates, unless by diminishing the number of paupers; and that is only to be done by a *total change of system*, which these gentlemen are very careful never to propose, and which, indeed, they seem always prepared to reprobate. What should we think of a man who *complained* that strong beer made him drunk, and who still continued to drink strong beer by the gallon? Yet, such a man's conduct would be just as consistent as is that of those persons who complain of the increasing amount of the poor rates, while they steadily support a system, the unavoidable effect of which is to create paupers.

As to the *extent* of the evil it is not to be described in all its parts. Young and old, there are little short of 2 millions of paupers in England, including common beggars and persons in alms-houses; and that is, upon an average, about *one* pauper, or beggar, to every four who are not paupers or beggars. I have, upon a former occasion, given particular details of *country* parishes. I will here give an account of the paupers and rates in the parish of St. SEPULCHRE, which is in the heart of the City of London. I have lying before me an official account, given to me by Mr. MILLER of that Parish, signed by WM. SCAIFE, Vestry Clerk, and dated on the 11th of January, 1816, which states, that there were then,

Paupers in the Work-house,	227
Children at Nurse,	25
Insane Poor,	8
Relieved out of the House,	92
Relieved in the Country,	9

besides those paupers who receive occasional relief.

Now, the number of persons who pay poor rates in this parish was, at the same period, 612. The annual amount of the expenses was about £6 600.

This is a pretty picture of the prosperity of the opulent city of London. Facts like these are food for reflection with sensible men. Such men must see, that it is not an act of parliament to make a new arrangement as to the mode of raising the rates, which will cure this most dreadful evil. Before the wars against the people of France; before those wars, which have ended in restoring the Bourbons, the Pope, and the Inquisition; before those wars, during which, by way of episode, the Washington Buildings were burnt, and Alexandria was plundered; before those wars the paupers in this country were not one third part so numerous as they now are. So that here is a change, which the Cossacks should never forget, when they are boasting of the achievements of that "glorious contest."

Of the manner in which the paupers are treated, it would be difficult to give any general description, seeing that it varies very much according to the ability of the people to pay, and to the disposition of the persons having power over them. But, what may be done with them, and what is done, in some cases, may be gathered from the following speech of SIR ROBERT HERON, made in the House of Commons on the 2d instant. "SIR ROBERT HERON moved for leave to bring in a Bill, for amending certain clauses in an act recently passed respecting the Lincoln Poor Rates. He was not aware of any good which resulted from particular local acts respecting poor rates. as he thought the act of the 22d George II. was admirably suited to every case. After a painful recital of the miserable state of the workhouse in that city, he mentioned that there were five cells strongly guarded with iron bolts, not for the reception of lunatics, but for the punishment of such poor persons as might fall into any transgression. In each of these there were strong iron staples in the wall and floor, to which the poor delinquent was chained. Among several instances of cruelty, the worthy Baronet mentioned, that a Chelsea pensioner, 70 years of age, and totally

blind, had been, for a whole fortnight chained to the floor because he had been drunk! That a very young girl, having contracted a certain disease, had been chained in a similar manner to the floor, lest she should contaminate others. One chain fixed round her body had been weighed, and would the House believe him when he stated that it was no less than 28 pounds weight! These facts he pledged himself were true. He moved, therefore, for leave to bring in a bill for amending the present Act."

I dare say that the Cossacks of Massachusetts will maintain, that all this is very right; or, at any rate, that it is much better that this should take place, than that the French nation should have been suffered to remain free. But, they may be well assured, that this state of things cannot last for many years. The number of the paupers is now become so great in proportion to the population of the country, that some serious consequence is at no great distance from us. So that, unless the Cossacks put up prayers for the system, it will fail, at last, as sure as they are born.

However, you, in America, must not suppose that we are all paupers; that none of us live in a good style. We are very liberal people towards our great folks, as I have before shown you. But, that you may have some idea of the way, in which our Royal Family live, I will here give you an account of the expense of the Prince Regent's living for a quarter of a year, as stated in the Lord Steward's account up to the 5th of January last. The Lord Steward may be regarded as head servant in the family, who orders in the eatables and drinkables, and pays the in-door servants and the tradesmen. There are other great men who manage the other departments of expense. The account is as follows:

Bread, Butter, Bacon,	
Cheese, and Vegetables,	£1,121 19 10½
Butcher, Poulterer, and	
Fishmonger, - - -	3,411 13 1½
Beer and Cider, - - -	586 9 0
Wax and Tallow Lights,	1,460 19 7
Grocery, Oilery, Lemons,	
&c. Tea, Milk and	
Cream, - - - -	3,235 15 7½
Wine, - - - -	2,120 3 10

Lamps, - - - -	818	6	7 $\frac{1}{2}$
Washing, - - - -	210	18	0
Fuel, - - - - -	1,090	16	0
Stationer, - - - -	96	19	6
Turner and Brazier, -	375	1	0 $\frac{1}{2}$
China and Glass, -	259	19	3
Linen, - - - - -	101	13	3
	14,890	14	8 $\frac{1}{4}$
Kew Palace, - - -	0	0	0
Windsor Cottage, - -	137	19	0 $\frac{1}{2}$
Disbursements and Enter- tainments, - - -	6,250	0	0
	21,278	13	8 $\frac{3}{4}$
Her Royal Highness the Princess Charlotte, -	2,614	0	9
Gardens, - - - -	4,575	5	0 $\frac{1}{2}$
Treasury and Exchequer Fees, - - - - -	29	10	0
Salaries to Officers and Seryants, including Wa- ges, and Board Wages to Chapels, £4,800	3	3	
Compensation allowance in lieu of Tables, 2,245	9	6	
Do. to retired Officers, 1,192	10	0	
Superannuation Allowance and Bounties to Poor Servants, and Annual Bounty to Widows of deceased Officers and Servants, 4,206	11	3	
	12,444	14	0
	£40,942	3	6 $\frac{3}{4}$

How the Cossacks will smack their lips at the sight of this Bill of Fare! Forty thousand pounds a quarter, is 160,000 pounds or 640,000 Dollars a year! Therefore, if you think that John Bull is a niggard, you are very much deceived. Your President receives altogether, only 25,000 dollars, or, about 6,000*l.* a year; but, then, he is only one of yourselves. He has no Royal blood flowing in his veins. It is not, therefore, proper, that he should be paid as kings and other Royal personages are paid. You see, in this account, the item of wages and board wages to Chapels. What would the Cossack Priests give to belong to these Chapels! This, I dare say, is one of those "*venerable institutions*" upon which they constantly have their eye. No wonder that they

should prefer the British government, Monarchy and all."

To return, now, to the poor rates and the paupers: I have so many times proved, as I think, that *pauperism*, that the misery of the labouring people, is a *necessary consequence of heavy taxation*; I have, even in the present Volume, so clearly demonstrated this fact, that I will not here repeat my arguments on the subject. But, a fact or two that I have not recently stated, I will state here. In the reign of Charles II., the poor rates of England did not amount, in a year, to more than 200,000*l.* And, though the population of England has *increased*, it has not increased in the proportion which is generally supposed, a proof of which is, that hundreds of thousands of acres of land, *formerly cultivated* now lay in the shape of *Downs*. Near London there has been a great deal of waste land enclosed; but, in Dorsetshire, Wiltshire, Devonshire, Cornwall, and even in Hampshire and Sussex, the old marks of the *plough*, which no time seems capable of effacing, remain on large tracts, where the plough has not gone for a century. London and its neighbourhood have enormously increased in buildings and population; but, whole villages, once populous, in the distant parts of the country, have become depopulated, or, they contain only a few miserable hovels, built of mud and thatch, surrounding a lofty and beautiful old church, built of stone, and of dimensions to contain a thousand people. From these facts, which I defy any one to contradict, I conclude, that nearly all which some parts of the country have gained in population, other parts of it have lost. It is true, that, by the vast improvement derived from a knowledge of the arts and sciences, applicable to agriculture, an acre of land has been made to produce, upon an average, more than formerly; but, then, the waste of luxury has made the demand greater for the same number of mouths. Therefore, admitting, that, upon the whole, the population of England has increased, it cannot have increased in any very great degree; but, how fearful has been the increase of the poor rates and paupers!

Heavy taxation being the principal cause of this increase, what remedy can be applied other than that of making taxation no longer heavy? It is useless to

bring forward abstract propositions as to the existence and increase of the evil. It is useless to declare, that *something ought to be done*. The only question worth agitating is, *what ought to be done?* And, the only rational answer to that question is, *render taxation no longer so heavy, that the labourer cannot receive more than a bare sufficiency to sustain life*; take less from the employer in the shape of taxes, and the labourer and journeyman will then have more in the shape of wages, and will want less, or nothing at all, in the shape of pauper pay.

There is something so childish in the proposition to make tradesmen and other mere householders *assist* the farmers, in the country, in paying the poor rates; or, to levy the amount of them by a *general tax*, that I can hardly bring myself to treat it seriously; just as if every creature who eats *bread*, or, at least, who pays for *bread*, did not *now* assist in re-imbursing the farmer for what he pays in poor rates! But, there wants a good long essay, one of these days, to show, in a manner more full and clear than I ever yet have shown, that a tax laid upon the land only would be the best tax; that is to say, for instance, if 50 millions a year were raised in England from the occupiers of land alone, and if there were no other tax in the country, this would be the best, surest, and *fairest* possible mode of raising the 50 millions. This position, which I think myself able to prove to the satisfaction of any man, who will take time to reflect, and whose head is not uncommonly muddy, is a very interesting one to you, in America, who are not yet so far gone in Custom Houses, Excise Offices, and Stamp Offices, as not to be able to stop. As a measure of mere *foreign policy*, it may sometimes be necessary to meet imported goods at the water's edge; but, the system of *variety* in taxation, and all the notions about not taxing *this* or *that* article because such tax *would fall upon the poor*; the whole of this system and set of notions have arisen, piece-meal, with the wants of governments, are supported by no one solid principle, and can never stand the test of reason clearly and forcibly applied.

From this radical error, however, what a multitude of mischiefs have arisen! Amongst a thousand of others, we now see before our eyes the mazes in which

so many men of good intentions, and good talents, too, are wandering. They first fly on upon this tax, and then upon that tax: one wants relief for the barley-grower; another for those who live on salt meat; another wants the *little* farmer's riding horse to go untaxed; a fourth calls for relief for the butter and cheese farmer; a fifth requests the house to relieve the leather trade; a sixth calls aloud for the price of beer to be forced down; a seventh wants a regulation to compel brewers to make their beer of a certain strength! If these gentlemen, some of whom, like Mr. BRAND, for instance, are not only upright but very able men, had not imbibed the false notions of multifarious taxation; if they could but, for a moment, completely divest themselves of that confusion of ideas, they never would talk thus.

I have been watching narrowly to see whether my LORD FOLKESTONE had his peculiar point of pressure to relieve. No: *he*, at any rate, knows very well, that there is but one remedy, and that that is, to lessen the *general load* of taxes; and, he knows, too, that it is of no consequence where the work is begun or where it is ended, except, indeed, that the *worst* tax always is that, be it what it may, which employs, in proportion to its amount, the greatest number of taxgatherers, and gives to the government the greatest degree of undue influence. His lordship must laugh when he hears the leather and salt tax described as bearing with peculiar weight upon the labourer; for he has a head capable of tracing these taxes to the consumers of bread, meat, cheese, butter, cloth, &c.; he knows well that *these* are the persons who pay the tax on the leather of the labourer's shoes, and on the salt which he puts into his broth.

After all, then, the remedy for *pauperism* is the same as for every other species of pressure; that is to say, a *reduction of taxes*; and, if this reduction take place to any considerable extent, how is the interest of the Debt to be paid? How are the *grand army*, and the *navy*, and the *civil list* to be supported? There is a most furious outcry for *economy*, on the part of those who promised to expend their last shilling, and the last drop of their blood, in the late contest. But, how has economy been begun? Look at the late divisions, and you will see, that it has been

proposed to take 2,000*l.* a year from Rose's emoluments, but that the proposition has been rejected. You will see, that a similar proposition to get rid of a secretary of state for the *war department*, in time of *peace*, has shared a similar fate. And, I assure you, that I do not expect, that, out of the proposed 29 millions for the peace establishment, *two* millions will be lopped off. *Reason* and *justice* demand a reduction of all salaries, and allowances, and pay to the standard of twenty-five years ago, seeing that *food* and *wages* are gone back to that standard, and seeing that the salaries, &c. were raised expressly on account of the rise in food and wages. This reduction is so manifestly just and reasonable, and so clearly necessary to the public good, and even to the tranquillity of the country, that you will be astonished that the measure should have been delayed for a moment. But (a word in your ear) there are so many of the Members of both Houses, who, either in their own persons, or those of their relations or dependants, receive such large sums out of the taxes, who hold offices, sinecures, pensions, grants of money, grants of Crown Lands, commissions in the army and navy, governorships, law employments, &c. that, to reduce salaries, and pay, and allowances, would, in fact, be to do away their own means of living in splendour. They will, therefore, keep them up to the high mark as long as they are able to force the money out of the pockets of the people. It is quite useless to tell them that they must yield at last. Their answer is, it will be time enough to do that when they can no longer get the money. It is equally useless to tell them, that, by pursuing this course, they run the risk of exasperating the people, and of producing a revolution. They say, in answer to this, that it is no matter to them, whether they lose their plunder by a revolution or by an act of Parliament. — What, then, is to be done? These usurpers of the people's rights; these *real* usurpers, who derive their power from sheer tyranny, and who surround themselves *with troops*, when any show of resistance is made to their oppressive measures; who, in many cases, actually levy taxes by the aid of troops: do you think that these men will ever give up their power, 'til they are *forced* to do it? They know well, that, if the people

were to choose their representatives, that all the plunder would cease. They know well, that a reform of the House of Commons would, in the space of two years, set all to rights, restore to the people their due, and punish those who have robbed them. It was the dread of such a reform, and that alone, which produced the war against France, in 1793. It was the same dread which produced the renewal of the war in 1803, and that of 1815, as I have clearly shown in former Numbers of this volume. To the same cause we owe the *disposition* to enter on the late war with America, and this disposition, aided by the encouragement of your Cossacks, produced the war. These usurpers saw, that they never could be safe, while your example of freedom existed; and, therefore, they added fifty millions more to our Debt with a view of destroying that example, and also with that of having your country as a source of power and of plunder. I *know*, that the plan was to *recolonize* the United States, which were to have been called *provinces*. The Duke of Cumberland was to have been Viceroy, and Lords Yarmouth, Wellesley, Melbourne, and two of the Seymours were to have been amongst the Governors. The firmness and wisdom of your government, the valour of your fleets and armies, and, above all, the good sense and virtue of your people, defeated this nefarious scheme, and gave the cause of freedom, in Europe, life and hope. The same cause, the dread of reform in Parliament, still is uppermost in the minds of these usurpers; and, until such reform take place, never will they yield any portion of that immense sum of plunder, which they receive, directly or indirectly, out of the taxes, in the shape of salaries, pay, allowances, grants, and civil list.

Yet, 'til this be done, 'til the salaries, and pay, and civil list, be all brought down to the standard of 1792, it would be most atrocious injustice to reduce, or even to talk of reducing, the interest of the Debt. It is very true, that, at this time, the Stockholders are receiving, in fact, a great deal more than five per centum for money lent since 1797. To bring this matter to a fair state, however, all salaries, and pay, and allowances, must first be reduced; or, how can the Parliament attempt to find a justification for reducing the interest of the Debt? This is the

great obstacle to a restoration of the nation's affairs; and, as I have told you before, it is pretty certain, that this obstacle will operate effectually during *this session* of Parliament. I do not know that the thing will not go on thus, 'til all the present land owners, except the *very great ones*, and except those who, in some way or other, receive part of the taxes, will have lost their estates, which are now passing away from them at a full gallop; and, thus, we may, at last, live to see, that the system of Pitt was, in reality, the best and most effectual way of producing *equality*. Every year now gives the aristocracy a furious push downwards. Their estates are continually coming to the hammer. You would be surprised to see how the Commissioners, Contractors, and others, who have grown rich by the war, are shoving them out of their old mansions. You will say, that this is a change for the better; and, in some respects, it certainly is. At any rate, it is a natural consequence of the measures which the aristocracy themselves have supported. They are entitled to *no pity*. SIR FRANCIS BURDETT told them, in the House of Commons, years ago, that, "while they were zealously attending to the improvement of the cultivation of the soil; while they were so active at Agricultural Societies and Cattle Shows, they seemed not to perceive, that the *land itself* had, in fact, been taken from them, and that they would make the sad discovery when it would be too late." These were nearly his very words. The land owners, who heard these words, paid little attention to them. They thought Sir Francis Burdett "a violent man." They now find, that it was *wisdom*, and not *violence*, which dictated this memorable advice.

Since the date of my last letter to you the state of the country has certainly been going on from bad to worse. Despair, in many cases, has made shocking havoc. The sales by distress warrants for rent and taxes have become more and more common. The property at these sales is really *given away*. A plough, which, only a year ago, cost, perhaps, 5 pounds, is sold frequently for 10 or 15 shillings. A threshing machine which cost *fifty* pounds, was, the other day, not far from my house, sold for *five* pounds. At no great distance, a farmer, a fine young man, not married

many years, and who had a good fortune, has just *cut his throat*. Two others, within my observation, have gone *mad*. Hundreds quit their farms by *night*, steal away their goods, and flee the country. I know what *you* will say to all this. I know that you will say, that you feel for the sufferings of all mankind; but, that you cannot think us more entitled to your compassion than were the pillaged French people and the brave Marshal Ney and others, whom our allies, the Bourbons, have put to death. I know you will exclaim, "Well! and do you not *merit* your sufferings? Have you not brought yourselves into this state by those base passions, which induced you, at last, to hire a million of mercenaries to rob and murder the French people? How many hundreds of thousands of throats have you paid for cutting? The means of supporting Captain Henry were furnished by you? How many of our seamen have you murdered in various ways? Have not the sums paid by you restored the bloody power of the despots and the Pope in Europe, and again enabled the enemies of free consciences to cut the throats of Protestants in France? Is it not *just*, then, that you should now be driven to cut your own throats?"—It is all very true. Certainly, if we had not done these things, we should not, at this day, have experienced such miseries as we now experience. These miseries are the natural consequences of such conduct. I must, however, put in this plea for the people of England, that they have been most infamously treated by a *press*, which is not less wicked, and far more powerful, than that of your Cossacks. The people were, perhaps, envious enough of the freedom and happiness of France; but, they never could have acted as they have done, had it not been for a most wicked and powerful press. I know, that you will say, that, when you look back to the scenes at the *River Raisin*, at *Frenchtown*, at *Hampton*, and at those which were intended for *Baltimore* and *New-Orleans*; and when you reflect that our present miseries arise out of the Debt partly contracted to carry on the war against you, it is impossible for you to cry your eyes out at hearing of these our miseries. And, if I do not ask you to do this, I must, at any rate, beg you to believe, that we have not *all of us* merited

this severe visitation of the Pitt system, of which many amongst us have always disapproved.

LORD WELLESLEY has lately observed, in the House of Lords, on the subject of the conduct of *the people*, that they most cheerfully gave their money to carry on the war, and that, "amongst all the Petitions, there was not to be found *one word of repentance at our past efforts.*" This is stated in the report of the speech; and, if the words were uttered, they were, I dare say, true as to the petitions to the Lords; but, with regard to those laid before the Commons, there is *repentance* enough expressed for our past efforts, or, at least, for the consequences of them. The petitions of Middlesex, Somersetshire, Wiltshire, Worcestershire, and many, many others, express disapprobation at our having interfered in the internal affairs of other nations. LORD HOLLAND is reported to have said, in a recent debate, that, "With regard to a majority of the people who were said to be in favour of the Income Tax, he could not help considering it as a *majority of the same description as that for the Bourbons in France*, and he suspected that if both majorities were sent where certain individuals were sent, to *Elba* or *St. Helena*, that either of these islands would be fully large enough to contain them."—His Lordship, who is really a very good, and very able man, has been abused for this by some of our venal writers, but you will not, on that account, pay less attention to his words, which you may be assured, did not drop from his lips in a *casual* way, and without solid grounds for believing the fact.

The hired part of the press is continually at work to make the people believe, that the miseries of the country have *not arisen out of the war*. The motive for this is manifest enough. But, they labour in vain. Every man, be he in what state of life he may, knows now, he is now taught by his *feeling*, that it is the taxes which make him suffer. He knows, or is told, of the small amount of taxes that was paid in 1792, and of the plenty and prosperity which then reigned in England. He next asks why the taxes cannot be reduced to the amount of 1792, seeing, that now we are at peace as we were in 1792; and, he is told, that the *cost of the war* renders such reduction im-

possible. The conclusion is, that the war, and the war alone, has been the cause of his misery; and to prevent him from coming to this conclusion, or to get it out of his head after it is safely lodged there, is beyond the power, even of such a press as ours. The people, therefore, now feel, that they owe their miseries to that war which they so long supported with all their might. They see, too, that that war has hung a mill-stone about their necks, which is never to be got rid of by any little milk-and-water measures. They appear to feel no interest in any of the projects that are afloat; but, stand in a sort of sulky mood, waiting to see what will be done, or, rather, to see whether any thing *radical* will be done.

One of the schemes that have been started is, a *tax upon emigration*. I mentioned this in an article published *last year*, which article, I perceive, has been republished in America. It seemed to me next to impossible that the project should be seriously entertained, and so I observed, at the time, though I did also say, that I would *answer for nothing* in these times. However, from the following report of what passed in the House of Lords, upon the subject, on the 5th instant, it would appear that the scheme has, by no means, been abandoned. LORD VISCOUNT BULKELEY asked, whether it was intended to impose any tax upon persons quitting this country? He asked this, because he understood that a *number of persons were about to quit the country*, and he thought it a fair principle that if they *withdrew themselves from taxation here*, they ought to be, in some way or other, made to pay to the support of the establishments of the country."

"THE EARL OF LIVERPOOL said, that *several suggestions had been made upon this subject to the Treasury*, but hitherto none that he did not consider liable to too many objections. He thought, however, the principle *perfectly just*, that persons who withdrew themselves from the country, and thus *withdrew themselves from taxation*, should be rendered liable, in some way, to the support of the establishments of the country, if such a principle could be carried into effect by means of any plan that would not draw with it greater disadvantages than benefit."

These are the speeches for me! They speak volumes. Lords LAUDERDALE and Holland expressed their disapprobation of the scheme; and the latter corrected Lord Liverpool, whom he understood to say, that emigrants withdrew themselves from *direct* as well as *indirect* taxation. They certainly do not withdraw themselves from the *land tax*, nor from the tax on Stamps in part; but, they withdraw themselves from the assessed taxes and the taxes on consumption, which make more than nineteen twentieths of every man's taxes, now that the income tax is gone.

But, only think of its being a matter of importance to *check* English land owners in *their desire to go and spend their incomes abroad!* That it is truly humiliating to think that any such measure should have been thought of, every man must see. And, what sort of measures must those be, by which such a tax could be apportioned and collected? *Who* is to KNOW whether a gentleman be gone out of the kingdom or not? Lord Liverpool says, that "*several suggestions* have been made upon the subject to the Treasury." What a curious thing this collection of suggestions must be! I would give a trifle to get at them. However, suggest as long as they please, I defy them to collect any such tax without first passing a law to prohibit *all* persons whatever going out of the country without a *license*: and, whenever that shall take place, you will, I hope, no longer deny, that this is, indeed, "*a nice little, tight little Island.*"

Lord BULKELEY knows, it seems, of "*a number of persons who are about to quit the country.*" I dare say his lordship does; and he will know of more yet. But, if a man has no income and no property that he has stolen from the public, why should he not go and spend his income where he pleases? However, the effect of a tax would be to make people *sell* their property, and carry the gold and silver to other countries. Those who have entailed estates could not, indeed, do this; but many others would; so that, in a very short time, the remedy would be found to be worse than the disease. Yet, it is very true, that these emigrations will add much to the miseries of the country, by leaving so many labourers and servants to become paupers, and to be maintained by those who are compelled to remain at home. The country seats will,

many of them, become desolate. Cattle will roam over the lawns and pleasure grounds; the fruit trees will run to ruin; the bramble and the nettle will become the tenants of the parterre; and the chattering of the Jack Daws will alone be heard in those halls which used to resound with toasts and songs in praise of the 'Squire. Alas! poor 'Squire Jolterhead! What, you are setting off, then, to learn French in your old age? You are going to exchange the "*Roast Beef of Old England,*" for the "*Soup maigre, frogs, and sallad of France.*" Well! fare thee well, Jolterhead; and, when thou lookest back with aching heart towards England, recollect, that it is not the Jacobins, but the Pittites, who have driven thee from thy estate.

The following is a specimen of what is going on in the neighbourhood of Exeter. It is taken from an Exeter newspaper of last week:—"It is with *much regret* we learn, that *several genteel families* are shortly about to emigrate from this neighbourhood to France; among the rest a gentleman, who is a *magistrate* of the county, residing a few miles distant from this city, of considerable landed property; so that the annual value of his estates will be laid out with Frenchmen. We are sorry that this unpatriotic custom is so prevalent; it is a serious and growing evil; and it is much to be wished that the Legislature would attach some *weighty taxation* on British capital thus transferred into the hands of foreigners."—Exeter is the capital of Devonshire; a very fine city, and in a very rich and most delightful country. But, how does the author of this paragraph know what are the circumstances of this gentleman? How does he know what debts he may have to pay, and whether his income will maintain him in England, after the paying of those debts?

This is, as I, more than two years ago, said it would be, a very serious feature in our situation. It is allowed, on all hands, that the pre-eminent wretchedness of Ireland has, in a great degree, arisen from the *absence* of the owners of the land. And, of course, the same consequences will follow in England. For remain here to help pay the 60 millions of taxes that are wanted those persons will not, who can remove from the country without great

inconvenience. The half-pay officers (a very numerous class) will carry their portion to Belgium and France, from the same motive that people of fortune will go thither. People in the middle ranks of life, farmers and tradesmen, and artisans, and manufacturers, will, many of them, remove; and, indeed, they are now removing to America, whither motives of religious and political freedom will also take great numbers. The persons who go to America will, too, be from amongst the best in this country. They will either be persons who have some property to begin with; or they will be journeymen of the best talents in their several trades. They will all be men of enterprise, full of confidence in their health and abilities.

So that, if the present system were to last for eight or ten years, England would become quite a different country from what it ever has been at any former period. The population would dwindle as well with regard to quality as to quantity; the means of the country, and, consequently, its power, would decline. Commerce and Navigation are always in proportion to *internal* industry and means. The falling off of the commerce in the port of London is become notorious. The custom house is not the crowded scene that used to be. So that, if this system of expending 60 millions a year be persevered in for a few years; or, indeed, if taxes to *any thing like that amount* continue to be collected, the next eight or ten years will show the world what a change a thousand millions of Debt are capable of producing in the character and power of a country. There is no tax, no law, no penalty, no corporal punishment, that will prevent men from endeavouring to seek ease and happiness. The little Island is *tightly* enough guarded; but, the interest of a Debt of a thousand, or 12 hundred millions, is too large for men to be bound to pay, together with 20 or 30 millions of other expenses yearly.

The likely event is, however, that the evil will, before it be long, produce its own cure. What with the fall in the value of property: the increase of pauperism; the emigration of persons of fortune; the diminution of industry and production; the poverty of farmers, shopkeepers, and tradesmen: what with all these and many other causes, one of two

things is likely to happen, in the course of two or three years; that is to say, such a falling off in the taxes as will make it impossible for the government to pay the interest of the Debt; or, *such a mode of collection* as will, after making the people desperate, rouse them to take tardy, but effectual, vengeance on their oppressors. And, thus, one way or the other, the evil, I think, must, at no distant day, work its own cure.

Since my last the storm seems to be gathering about the ears of the Church. I have told you before what a sort of body this is. I have told you how *strong* it is. But, really, the Agricultural distress people do appear to be resolved to make a push at it. They seem to think it more vulnerable than either the *Sinecures*, the *Salaries*, the *Pensions*, or the *Civil List*. Numerous petitions are coming *peppering* in, like grapeshot, against the *Tithes*. The *reasons* stated in these petitions are the curious part of the affair. Now, you shall hear those which the Devonshire people give: "That, in order to preserve the Constitution of the United Empire of Great Britain and Ireland, as well civil as ecclesiastical, it is *necessary that there should be an Established Clergy*, learned and independent.—That the functions of the Clergy being *limited to the promulgation of the Christian doctrines*, the influence which they hold by virtue of the laws over the Agriculturalist is *incompatible with their Holy Establishment*, and prevents an extended cultivation of the land.—That the laws in their operation have been the means of *creating inveterate jealousies* and disputes between the Clergy and the People, which have been followed by *secessions from the National Church*, and by *schisms and opinions destructive of sound morality*."

What precious cant! What barefaced falsehood! What outrageous nonsense! These people would abolish the tithes for the sake of *religion*! At the end of seven hundred years they have discovered, that tithes are incompatible with the duties of priests. However, I beg to be clearly understood as by no means *opposing the object in view*. But, I cannot suffer falsehood, nonsense, and cant to pass without animadversion. This is a matter in which I will take no part. Here are the Yeomanry Cavalry on one side, and

the Clergy on the other. They most cordially united against the French *republicans* and the English *reformers*; and I am quite willing, for my part, to leave them to settle the question of tithes in their own way.

WM. COBBETT.

THE AMERICAN PACKET.

No. II.

Character of Major General Jacob Brown.

Botley, 13th April, 1816.

DEAR JOHN BULL,

One of the means, which the parasites of your press make use of to amuse you, is, to put forth biographical anecdotes of royal and aristocratical commanders by land or by sea. How many volumes have you read, or, rather, gaped at, about "*Prince Blucher*" and other German and Russian Commanders. How many swords, set with diamonds, have the citizens of London voted to such men! Let me, in order to give a little variety to your reading in this way, relate to you the actions, and describe the character, of a Republican General, decorated with *neither ribbons nor stars*, bearing no other title than that of his office, and exercising his skill, courage, and perseverance in no other cause than that of freedom, which cause, indeed, appears to have induced him to strip off the garb of a *quaker*, and to put on that of a soldier.

The American MAJOR GENERAL BROWN, concerning whom I published (from a Boston paper, called the *YANKEE*) an article in a late number, (No. 14. vol. 30.,) is a person really worthy of your attention, much more than all the Russian and German Commanders, about whom you have heard so much and have made so much empty noise. It is stated, in the article, to which I have just alluded, that he was born of Quaker parents, and was brought up a Quaker, "in Duck's County, Pennsylvania, a little below *Trenton*." The Boston editor has here made two mistakes. There is no *Duck's County* in Pennsylvania, and *Trenton* is in New-Jersey. It should have been *Buck's County*, and, I dare say, a little below *Newtown*, which is the County-town of *Buck's County*. And, as little men have always a hankering after an ac-

quaintance with great men, I am strongly disposed to believe, that I had the honour to know this celebrated man before he had a flap to the pocket of his coat. There was a most worthy Quaker, whose name was *John Brown*, who had, I think, several sons, and who lived not far below *Newtown* in *Buck's County*. His father was one of those who went from England with, or soon after, *William Penn*. This Quaker we used to call "*old John Brown*," and, if alive, he must now be about 80 years of age. He was a very hearty, active, and intelligent man 17 years ago. I remember, that on a shooting party at his house, a Mr. *WILLIAM ERVING* and I shot, at single shots, just one hundred partridges in one day; that is to say, Mr. Erving shot ninety-nine and I shot one. He shot just a hundred times, and I, perhaps, fifty. If Mr. Erving, who was a lawyer at Philadelphia, be still alive, as I most sincerely hope he is, he will remember this adventure.

If, however, Major General Jacob Brown, be a son of Old John Brown, (a fact which I should very much like to know,) he inherits no small portion of vigour and of spirit from his father, who, though always a Quaker, had kept a *pack of hounds* in his younger days, and was not a man to turn the left cheek, if smitten on the right.* Be this matter of parent-

* Something of the character of John Brown may be gathered from the following anecdote, which I had from himself: A great many years before the date of the relation to me, his house was broken open in the night. The family were awakened by a most furious barking of the hounds. When he and his people, or brothers, or whoever else it might be, went down stairs in order to go to the kennel to see what was the matter, they found that a chest of some sort had been broken open, and that the robbers had gone off with a little box which had been locked up in the chest, and which contained money, title-deeds, and, perhaps, some other things of value. At a loss to know what course to take in pursuit, Mr. Brown called out to somebody to *let out the hounds*, while he and some other person, or persons, saddled their horses. The hounds being brought to the door from which the robbers had started, and being properly cheered on, took the scent, and away they went at full cry, just as if they had been after a fox. The robbers crossed a river; (or *creek*;) but, over went the hounds and hunters after them. The chase ended in the catching of the robbers, who

age, however, as it may, it is certain, that only 16 years ago, General Brown, now the Commander in Chief of the United States Troops, was the master of a Quaker school, in the city of New-York.

The great services which this gentleman performed for his country on the Canadian frontier, during the last war; the activity, intelligence, and courage which he displayed, first as a mere volunteer officer, next as a commander of militia, and lastly as an officer of the regular army, were of a kind, and attended with consequences, that justly called forth the admiration and gratitude of his country. But, his American Biographer has omitted one particular trait in his conduct, during the last campaign, which, above all others, ought to have been noticed, because it is so well calculated to give the reader a correct idea of the character of the man. After the battle of Niagara, I believe it was, (for I cannot find the documents,) in which battle one of his Aid-de-Camps had been wounded mortally and carried off as a prisoner by General Drummond's army, General Brown pressingy requested an *exchange* of this Aid-de-Camp, for whom he was willing to give up an officer of ours of superior rank. This request was refused, unless he would first send in the English officer. General Brown, informed, by this time, that his Aid-de-Camp was dead, sent in, nevertheless, the English officer, as an *equivalent* for his dead Aid-

were with difficulty saved from the dogs. They were lodged in Newtown jail, and, after some time, confessed, I believe, that they had thrown the little box into the creek, upon perceiving that the hounds were at their heels. How the robbers were dealt with I do not recollect; but, the box was sought after in the creek, and recovered. This used to be cited by Mr. Brown, as a triumphant answer to all those Quaker friends, who used to contend that hounds were of *no use*. The facts here related, and which are well known to hundreds of persons in Buck's County, add another instance to the thousands upon record, which are calculated to excite great doubts upon the subject of the cause of discernment in dumb animals. Was it *mere instinct* which taught these hounds to set up such an extraordinary outcry upon this particular occasion? Was it *mere instinct* that urged them to push on upon the *scent of men*, to hunt whom was not their nature, nor ever had been their practice? I should like to hear these questions answered by some one who has studied the subject.

de-Camp, whose corpse he actually *received in return!*

This was an act worthy of Napoleon himself. But, what is most worthy of our attention, is, that General Brown has mixed the *soldier* along with the *farmer* and *settler*. Called forth, time after time, in defence of his country, he has again and again returned to resume the arts of peace. He has built a flourishing village, called "*Brown's Ville*," which is now the headquarters of the army of the United States. What a character is here for us to contemplate! Not a mercenary, who fights and kills for mere *pay*; not a man who follows war as a *trade*, and who has no pretension to any right to investigate the merits of the *cause*, in which he draws his sword; but a man, engaged in the great work of education and civilization; a man, who, out of means wholly of his own creating, is raising up a village with one hand, while, with the other, he directs the thunder of his country against its menacing invaders.

While America has such men as this in her bosom, she has nothing to fear; and, it must be confessed, that the very state of society in that country, is calculated to produce such men. The distance, in many cases, of settlements from each other; the adventurous spirit, and personal hardihood, and courage naturally engendered by new, various, and grand scenes in nature, and by the toil and danger inseparable from first settlements; the ingenuity and adroitness brought forth by that great mother of invention, necessity; and the wonderful skill, which practice from infancy has given the Americans, is the most destructive weapon of war; these, and other causes that might be mentioned, will always provide America with able Generals, if, unhappily, she shall have occasion for them again.

Now, John Bull, in concluding this article, let me beseech you to look at the United States. You will find, that they have a frontier of 2,000 miles in extent, at least. That our Provinces of Canada lie beside them; that there are several nations of savages not always peaceably inclined; that there are some Spaniards to watch in another quarter; that there are numerous Forts to garrison; and yet, that the *peace-army* of the United States consists of only *six thousand men*.

WM. COBBETT.

MR. HOLDSWORTH'S LETTER.

The following letter from this gentleman, who is a Member of Parliament for Dartmouth, in Devonshire, and who has, upon this occasion, written to a friend in that County, is worth particular attention. It contains, in my opinion, erroneous notions about the *cause* of the distress, and, as to any *remedy*, it is so *vague* that one cannot even guess at the meaning of the writer; but as an exhibition of the *state of the country*, the Letter is valuable. Let the Cossacks of New-England read it; let them bear in mind that it comes from a *Member of Parliament*, who was a stanch friend of "*Social order*;" let them reflect, that these evils are the consequences of that war, on our part, which they so much applauded, and of that system of government, which some of them have had the impudence to prefer before that of their own country. Let them bear all this in mind, and then, if blushing be not wholly exploded amongst them, they will, surely, feel some little warmth in their cheeks as they read.

A LETTER TO A FRIEND IN DEVONSHIRE,
ON THE PRESENT SITUATION OF THE
COUNTRY. BY A. H. HOLDSWORTH,
ESQ. M. P. FOR DARTMOUTH.

London, March 2, 1816.

The miseries we anticipated are now finding their way to the City of London. I yesterday learned from a friend there, to whom I was talking on the subject, that the wholesale dealers, who have been round the neighbouring districts for orders, are scarcely able to procure any, "*as the farmers*," they are told, "*are no longer able to purchase any luxuries*." To him who will look into this remark, who knows all the points on which it touches, it is a volume on the state of the nation; on the melancholy change which we have seen for the last eighteen months taking place.

It tells you, that, till now, London had to learn into what state we had fallen: pointing out the height of luxury to which all ranks had risen, it shows to the statesman whence his indirect taxes were procured: to us, it but confirms the first part of the gloomy picture we had drawn, to the finishing of which we have looked with so much fear and anxiety.

But what could any men of thinking

minds expect, when they saw so many estates untenanted, and in the hands of the landlord; others turned into pasture, or tilled without manure; stock every day decreasing; farmers paying their taxes from their capital; and those who have not any, (a) leaving their farms in the night; covenants no longer of any (b) service—binding only the landlord; cattle sold to pay rates and taxes, making scarcely any (c) return; all improvements in estates naturally at an end; and in consequence (d) labourers of all ages on the pay of the parish; the circulation of money decreased to one third; and much of that on the western coast taken to (e) France for brandy: what, I say, with such a picture as this before their eyes, could any thinking men expect, but that the tradesman must stop his payments or shut up his shop; and that with him the London trader, the import merchant, and the Custom House, must inevitably fall.

The landlord, whose sole dependence is on his rents, living in the midst of his tenantry, the bulwark of our country, must cut down his establishment, diminishing his *direct taxes* on the one hand, but his *indirect taxes* ten fold on the other; or fly, as too many have felt compelled, to spend his small remaining rents

(a) Many men who have been thus obliged improvidently to dispose of their stock, have so contrived as to get their neighbours to assist them with their carts; and in one night have removed every thing portable to another part of the country: this is known by the familiar term of "going clear off."

(b) Covenants cannot be any longer of service when the tenant has not any thing which you can seize for your rent.

(c) A friend of mine sent a man to the fair at Brent, in Devonshire, to buy him one or two good colts, and gave him twenty pounds for the purpose: the man bought SEVEN, and returned two pounds ten shillings in exchange.

(d) In many parishes in Devonshire this is the case, the men receiving five shillings per week from the parish funds, and employing themselves in the most unproductive of all labour—breaking stones on the road.

(e) There is a very large increasing trade at this time carried on from our coast with the town of Roscow, near Morlaix, where the spirits are paid for in English Bank Notes.

in a foreign land, depriving his native country of its circulation and support, and in proportion filling the coffers of a foreign treasury.

Such is the state of our country at this momentous crisis; at the glorious termination of a war, in the attaining of which the efforts of the statesman and the warrior are beyond all praise.

I will now endeavour to show what has brought about this sudden change; why estates which were let at high rents, (improvidently as some conceive, who forget that to let under the proper value is to deprive the State of its revenue,) are now worth so little. From the great demands of Government for the supplies of the army, navy, and prisoners, the markets had attained a considerable height; they were certain and regular, and the farmer knew when he took his estate how to calculate its advantages; he knew that as long as the market could be regularly fed, a fair price could be obtained: he was no longer that man, of whom we have heard some sixty years ago, who walked to the market with his basket on his arm, or his single bag of corn on his horse; farming had become a science; it had changed to a trade, and every market was an exchange as much as that on Cornhill: there prices were settled, and business transacted, as in the city of London; and to keep up a regular supply for all our cities and Government Contracts, this was absolutely necessary: the effects grew out of the cause; the illiterate men, who compose that society, could not bring this about from their own invention; but the change of our society produced the effect in them: they were but the instruments of natural events.

But their taxes, tithes, and rents must be paid. The merchant in London, whose credit is good, who is known to be carrying on a just and fair trade, when suddenly wanting cash, takes his bill to the Bank of England, and it is changed into notes: the same system was as necessary to the country. The farmer, called on for his taxes, having his cattle in their stalls, and the stacks in his yard, went to the country banker and discounted his bill, well knowing that before the two months should expire at which it was drawn, he would be enabled to sell so much of his stock at a fair and proper price as to redeem it. And what has now brought him to the

state he is in? That which would bring two thirds of our merchants into the same situation if the Bank of England, alarmed at the state of trade, was suddenly to stop its discounts. The great glut in the market from the stoppage of government contracts, and the double difficulty arising from the improvident importation of corn, frightened the country banker: he refused to accommodate. The farmer, still pressed for his taxes and poor rates, was obliged to draw on his capital, or possessing it (as is always best for the country) in the character of farming stock, was obliged to take it to a market already overloaded: in vain to him to tell the taxgatherer to look at his stalls, his dairy, and his stack-yard; in vain to him to show the estate without a weed which was once a wilderness: his corn unthrashed, his cattle half fed, must fall under the relentless hand of the law; and that country, which two years since was the seat of every comfort, nay, of luxury itself, must, unless this blow be averted, return to misery and want. (f)

And here let me pause to say a few words on the difference of the situation of the tenant as regarding his natural landlord, and those who have now unconsciously usurped that character—the government and the poor. The farmer, when his rent day arrives, if his tenant is unable at the moment to pay him; if he sees that he is going on properly with his estate; that his cattle are not fit for the market, or the market ready for his corn, will wait until they are. Not so these new landlords: they must be paid the moment they require it, without any feeling for the soil; without any natural affection: like a conqueror in a foreign land, they take it regardless of consequences, leaving the owners of the soil to starve with their tenants.

But can this system last? If during the last year the tenant paid the taxes at the expense of his capital; if that which, when

(f) This system is strongly exemplified by the present situation of the county of Devon, where very much agricultural distress is felt, but where I do not remember that any bank has failed, showing that the prudence of the banker, in refusing, on the first alarm, to discount country paper, and getting his notes out of circulation, has saved himself, whilst the farmer has fallen a little sooner than he would otherwise perhaps have done.

ripe for the market, would be worth 50*l.* be sold for 20*l.* must not his property be deteriorated, and can he do the same this? Those, who are acquainted with agriculture, well know, that the moment things are thrown out of their course, destruction follows like a whirlwind. Who can command the corn to grow, or the cattle to feed? You must regulate your manure for the corn; your grass for the beasts; and if the *arrangement* is destroyed the whole system is lost. Need I, after this, ask if £——(g) were obtained last year by dint of executions on the tenant,—or loss of rent to the landlord, whether the very circumstance will not be the cause why half cannot be got now? and that to prove that £—— were obtained for the taxes, without a market for farming produce, is but to show that you put the farmer into a state to prevent him paying the same this year, and the landlord, either to cheat his tradesmen or put down his establishment, with either of which the indirect taxes must sooner or later equally fall.

And before I leave this subject, let me add, that, as wild is it to say that the quantity of country bank notes have been the cause of our sufferings, as to tell you that port wine is poison because some immoderately make use of it. Without country banks your system never could have been kept up, your war taxes never raised. Some, it is true, as in all other walks of life, have made an unfair use of them: yet those, who cry down this system in the present state of society, might expect to raise oranges in Lapland without the assistance of horticultural science!

But, say others, this will all be set right when we return to our good old system—when all again is cheapness and plenty. What does the stockholder answer? You forget that you owe me forty millions per annum; that the Chancellor of the Exchequer requires thirty more for the use of the Government; and that the poor require between (h) ten and

(g) It is not any consequence what was the amount of the exact sum obtained from landed property; the argument will be the same.

(h) The Poor Returns to the 25th of March, 1815, amount to 7,023,386, exclusive of 854 which made no return. An intelligent friend of mine takes the total at nearly eight millions; and assures me, that from what he has

twelve in a direct tax on the land for their support. To those who are in the habit of attending to parochial duties, we need not mention the extent of evils growing out of the *Poor Laws*; and the state, in which our parish poor now are, but too clearly proves how sadly the best, the most charitable of humane institutions may in time be perverted. Those Laws, once the safeguard against misery in old age or infirmity, are now the reward of idleness and vice; and not only is the disgrace of going to the parish done away, but the person that can impose on its officer is accounted the most clever in his society. To go into instances of this would fill a volume, and be foreign to the subject; suffice it to say, that if the increase is not speedily stopped, the poor will be sole possessors of the profits of the estates, leaving their natural owners badly paid as their stewards. For it is now well known and understood, that in the same degree as agriculture declines, do the claims on the parish purse increase, (i) and the indirect taxes diminish.

From this state of difficulties how are we to get out? When we had the entire command of the seas, when we obliged every passenger to call at our door, we could regulate our affairs as we liked; we could raise taxes at our pleasure; like the man who keeps the only inn on a road we could charge what we pleased. But when now every other country is open to the traveller, when he can stop where

seen of the increase to this time, the amount for the year 1816 to 1817, will be nearer twelve millions; whilst in the year 1785, the amount of the same expense was only 2,134,904*l.* 18*s.* 11*d.* showing an increase to the year 1816, of more than five times that sum. And comparing this statement with one sent me by the same person from his own parish, which is of small extent, and without a manufactory or town, in the south of Devon, the increase will be found nearly the same.

In 1734 it was 11*l.* 15*s.* 9*d.*

1786 . . . 35*l.* 14*s.* 7 1-2*d.*

1813 . . . 134*l.* 5*s.* 4*d.*

1815 . . . 164*l.* 10*s.* 2*d.*

Which sum he expects this year will be increased to one-ninth more.

(i) When labourers received half a crown a day, they could buy tea, sugar, &c. and many other little luxuries, which, at nine-pence, and one shilling, their present daily pay, they are obliged to forego.

he likes, will he buy (*j*) from us at a pound what he can get from others at ten shillings? Nay, are we so patriotic, that, when we can purchase from abroad at half the price of our own markets, we shall not be tempted to do it? Ask our farmer why he gives his friend brandy and water rather than strong beer: "Because," says he, "I sell my barley at twenty shillings per quarter, and the king's duties alone, when I buy it again, make me pay for it at eighty;" ignorantly unaware, that to support an illicit trade, must, in the end, be his ruin. And must we not expect the same will happen in all other sorts of merchandise! for, from the system of those who are engaged in this traffick, the expense of stopping them, I fear, will be equal to the revenue that will be saved by it: the greater the temptation from high duties, added to the want of other employment, the more they will dare, and the more they will increase.

If, then, the maxim be a just one, that you must bring down your taxation of the price of your commodity, or raise the price to taxation, what a picture is before us! For myself, I will only say, that to

(*j*) To show the rivalry we must expect in foreign markets, I need only ask what must be the situation of the Newfoundland merchant—Can he expect to sell his fish in Spain or the West Indies, when, to encourage their fisheries, and, above all, to make seamen, the French now give a bounty of twelve francs per quintal for all fish caught by themselves in Newfoundland and carried to the West Indies; and as Spain has imposed a duty on all fish of above five shillings per quintal, a bounty of five francs per quintal is given for all carried to that country direct, and six francs for such as may first come to any port in France, and afterwards be transported thither; with the duty of twenty-two francs per quintal on all foreign fish that may be imported into France, and other bounties to their own fisheries not necessary to mention.

Fish, when ready for the market, in Newfoundland, is worth about twelve francs.

face the danger is, I trust, half the battle; to know its extent, the only chance of finding its remedy.

Let every man who lives on the taxes of our country take care to keep the sources whence they flow in the most flourishing condition; let him take the burthen from the industrious, or assist them to bear them; let him stimulate industry in every way in his power; remembering that it is from the rapid circulation of money that the treasury coffers are filled; that there is not a money transaction between men which does not directly, or indirectly, leave something to the state.

Let the public creditor and public officer remember, that when the farmer cannot live, when the tradesman gives up his shop, and the merchant his counting-house, their revenues are at an end.

Let the land owner remember, that to stimulate the manufacturer, the merchant, and the tradesman, to industry, is the only means of improving his rents.

In fine, let the idle man be ever forward to assist the industrious with his purse, when, (*k*) *public credit being restored*, England shall yet support her character as the first nation of the world.

My dear—

Yours very faithfully,

A. H. H.

(*k*) It is supposed by many, that the result of the present state of agriculture, will be a scarcity of corn, at no very distant period, and that the country will, consequently, be relieved from its present distress. I fear, however, that it will be found to have a very different effect. It is a certain and regular market, that can alone restore public credit; individuals, it is true, may profit by high prices, but the system will be as disorganized as at present. Agriculture, as all other trades, must be confined to the limits prescribed by the capital employed in it; in proportion as the value of its produce is certain and regular, will men be induced to advance money for it, and in that proportion only, can we, I believe, hope to see it restored.

COPY RIGHT SECURED ACCORDING TO LAW.